

# Authorship of Squier and Davis' Map of the Marietta Earthworks: A Belated Correction

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It is well known that Squier and Davis in their classic *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, first published in 1848 by the Smithsonian Institution as the initial volume of their *Contributions To Knowledge*, relied upon the work of several other Ohio antiquarians, notably S. P. Hildreth, James McBride, and Charles Whittlesey. It is perhaps less known that Squier, who did the actual writing of the memoir, was somewhat negligent in acknowledging the use of the notes and maps of these other archaeologists and that before the "memoir" was finally published even he and Dr. E. H. Davis had become so estranged over acknowledgement and rights to the artifact collection that Squier seriously considered legal action.

Squier and Davis actively solicited the aid of Hildreth, McBride, Whittlesey, and other antiquarians of the state, as shown by correspondence in the E. G. Squier collection at the Library of Congress. Davis, who throughout displays a greater concern with proper acknowledgement of others' work, asks (June 18, 1846) "What do you propose to do with our friend McBride's labours, etc.? Would it not be well to get his paintings and his consent to use them for this work?" He was also (June 15, 1846) concerned about credit due himself: "My good fellow, amidst all your success, don't forget your friend at home. Meet (*sic*) out to him equal credit and a due share of the honours, etc."

McBride gave consent to Davis the following month and Whittlesey in the winter of 1846, though complications prevented his furnishing any detailed information until July, 1847. By that time, Squier was hard at work writing what was to be the preliminary report published by the American Ethnological Society, and Davis was admonishing in him (July 1, 1847) that "We must put McBride's name to all of his surveys, state their location on the plates. I understand that the old man has expressed some fears that he will not receive the credit that he is entitled to."

With publication of Squier's *Observations on the Aboriginal Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* by the American Ethnological Society in November, 1847, matters came to

a head. Davis, upon learning that he would not be included as coauthor, had already written an angry, hurt letter (September 22, 1847) that marked the beginning of the end of his friendship with Squier. Whittlesey, shocked to find no mention of previous workers in the field, including himself, wrote a stinging letter to Squier (December 6, 1847) and also wrote to McBride, suggesting that his work would not be properly acknowledge in the impending Smithsonian Institution publication. McBride appears to have taken the matter in stride, though a friend of his wrote a letter highly critical of Squier to the *Cincinnati Gazette*. McBride did make certain that full credit would be given to him and the people who helped him survey his sites in the Smithsonian memoir, and, to be fair to Squier, it should be pointed out that he did give full credit to the surveyors and delineators of the maps used in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*. He was even able to mollify Whittlesey with a "long and candid letter" (December 11, 1847) and get him to agree to "put right" the matter with Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian, and with the American Ethnological Society, to both of which institutions Whittlesey had expressed his mind.

Although Whittlesey averred that he was "not particularly sensitive in matters of this sort," no one familiar with his life and work can fully accept the statement, for Whittlesey was always extremely sensitive regarding criticism and proper acknowledgement of his own "contributions to knowledge"; in fact, his actions in this particular instance belie his words. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that he let Squier publish the survey of the extensive Marietta earthworks (Figure 1) under his name, for the work was not actually done by Whittlesey. Squier, it should be noted, gives Whittlesey ample credit, enough to make up for any previous slight: "The map here presented is drawn from a careful survey of these works, made in 1837, by Charles Whittlesey, Esq., Topographical Engineer of the State, under the law authorizing a Geological and Topographical Survey of Ohio. It has never been published; and its fidelity, in

every respect, may be relied on . . . The topography of the map, and the accompanying sections, are features which every intelligent inquirer will know how to appreciate."

This "Squier and Davis" or "Whittlesey" survey of the Marietta works was actually performed by Samuel R. Curtis. Whittlesey did not get around to acknowledging this fact until nearly forty years later when, in 1885, he revised his "Ancient Earth Forts of the Cuyahoga Valley, Ohio", originally published in 1871 as Tract 5 of the Western Reserve Historical Society. This revision was never published, but Whittlesey's handwritten revision of his account of previous investigations in Ohio has been preserved. To his discussion of Squier and Davis' work, he appended the following statement: "My friend and classmate the late Gen. Samuel R. Curtis in 1838, while a Civil Engineer of the State and engaged upon the Muskingum improvement, made a complete survey of these works, including profiles of the elevations and ditches. This plat he placed in my hands, which disappeared with my other plans of 1839-40. A copy was furnished to Mr. Squier (page 73) which by mistake he has credited to me, an error which has not hitherto been corrected."

Mapping the Marietta earthworks seems to have been Curtis' only venture into archaeology. Graduating from West Point in 1831, he was employed as an engineer on construction of the National Road. In April 1837 he became chief engineer of the Muskingum River improvement project, serving until May 1839. He resigned as adjutant-general of Ohio in order to fight in the Mexican War, later moving to Iowa, served in Congress, where he promoted the Pacific Railroad, and was made a major-general during the Civil War, being in charge of the Department of the Missouri. Following the war he was appointed to a commission examining the construction of the Union Pacific railroad and died in 1866, while engaged in this work.

#### REFERENCES

- Squier, Ephraim George  
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1848 *Ancient monuments of the Mississippi Valley. Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.

